

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 OC-06

CCO-00 /081 W

-----281412Z 007520 /44

R 281030Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4187

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANJUL 0425

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT GA

SUBJECT: TENSIONS RISING IN GAMBIAN ELECTION.

REF: A BANJUL 384 , B BANJUL 423

1. SOME VIOLENCE, INVOLVING INJURY TO PERSON AND PROPERTY, HAS BROKEN OUT AS POLITICAL TENSIONS RISE SHORTLY BEFORE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. MOST SERIOUS INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE DURING NCP VS PPP CONFRONTATIONS IN BASSE AREA MARCH 19 AND 20. "REPORTER" (PRESUMABLY EDITOR) OF PRO-NCP GAMBIA OUTLOOK CLAIMS IN MARCH 23 EDITION THAT VICE-PRESIDENT CAMARA TOOK PISTOL SHOT AT HIM, GRAZING HIS LEG. HE ALSO ACCUSES MINISTER OF EDUCATION CHAM AND OTHER LWP CANDIDATES OF FIRING PISTOLS. ALLEGEDLY, SEVERAL PEOPLE INVOLVED IN FRACAS NEEDED HOSPITALIZATION.

2. WHILE CHARGE AGAINST VICE PRESIDENT SEEMS FAR-FETCHED, CHAM IS KNOWN HOT-HEAD. NCP ACTIVITY IN UPPER RIVER AREA IS OF RECENT VINTAGE; THEREFORE, TEMPER MAY BE HOTTER THAN ELSEWHERE. IN COUNTRY WHERE POLITICS ARE HIGHLY PERSONALIZED, CONFIDENTIAL

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VIOLENCE IS EVER CLOSE TO SURFACE. POLICE ARE ON SPECIAL ALERT, AND DISPATCHED GEORGETOWN FIELD FORCE DETACHMENT TO BASSE OVER WEEKEND. FOREIGNERS ARE STAYING CLEAR OF CAMPAIGN TALLIES, AND ARE NOT IN ANY DANGER PROVIDED THEY USE ELEMENTARY PRUDENCE.

3. ALTHOUGH ALL CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE CONTESTED (REFTEL B),

MAIN INTEREST WILL CENTER ON ABOUT ONE DOZEN RACES (BANJUL,
(SUBURBS, NORTH BANK, AND PERHAPS ONE BASSE AREA SEAT).
MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, SIR ALIEU JACK (OLD PPP WAR
HORSE, AND FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE), TOLD CHARGE IN
CONFIDENCE THAT PARTY FEELS 23 SEATS ARE SAFE, THUS PPP
WILL CONCENTRATE EFFORTS IN TOUGH DISTRICTS. THIS
REPRESENTS REMARKABLY CNADID ASSESSMENT, AS MOST PPP
POLITICIANS BOAST THAT COMBINED OPPOSITION WILL BE HELD
TO FIVE SEATS OR LESS. ASSESSMENT REFTTEL A THUS APPEARS
RETAIN VALIDITY.WYGANT

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Message Attributes

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